

The transfer of all functions relegated to FEMA by the bill must be completed within 120 days of enactment of the bill.

This matter is far too important, and impacts directly the lives of too many of our nation's citizens, to delay any further. We must act quickly to restore FEMA's autonomy and effectiveness.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1174, the "FEMA Independence Act of 2009".

CONGRATULATIONS TO RON HULL

HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, I rise today to offer my hearty congratulations to Ron Hull on his reception of the Pioneer Award from the NEBRASKAland Foundation for his efforts to portray the spirit of Nebraska's heritage through his good works.

Each year, the NEBRASKAland Foundation celebrates Nebraska's entrance into the union. During this event, the Foundation honors distinguished Nebraskans for the impressive contributions to the State of Nebraska.

Nothing sums up the spirit and values of Nebraska more than a person's willingness to reach out to friends, neighbors, and even strangers to help make our world a better place. Ron's dedication to tourism, historical leadership, and his career in public broadcasting is an inspiration.

I thank Ron for his dedication and his service.

PRIMARY CARE VOLUNTEER INCENTIVE ACT

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Madam Speaker, America is facing a troubling physician shortage. It is estimated that the U.S. could be short 200,000 physicians by next year, while the number of patients is expected to increase by 24 percent. Furthermore, most medical school students incur more than \$100,000 in student debt and primary care doctors are becoming scarce. New physicians are entering more lucrative specialties that better assist in their student debt payoff.

To join efforts that are underway across the country to address health care workforce shortages, today I will introduce the Primary Care Volunteer Incentive Act. This legislation will create a volunteer program for primary care physicians that will allow them to receive medical school loan repayment for their dedication to a community health center with high needs.

The Primary Care Volunteer Incentive Act will implement a program for doctors who specialize in family medicine, general pediatrics and general internal medicine. This program will request a five year volunteer commitment that will help doctors to develop a strong and longstanding relationship with their patients and communities. The program will build on

the current National Health Service Corps program by allowing doctors to volunteer only part-time at a community health center in an area with a large primary care physician shortage.

This legislation is a vital step in closing the gaps that exist for medically disenfranchised Americans. Fifty-two percent of uninsured Americans do not have a primary care provider and at least two in five residents in Alabama, Alaska, Florida, Kansas, Mississippi, Missouri, Oregon, South Carolina and Utah have inadequate access to routine health services. We know that lack of access to a primary care provider means that patients are not receiving preventive care, which helps people to lead healthier lives and keeps them out of emergency rooms for preventable and manageable conditions.

Too many of our neighbors are without basic care. Ensuring access and affordable health care should be our top priority. I have seen first hand the positive impact that access to community health care has given my district in the Tampa Bay area, and today my bill will help to see that communities will not continue to suffer losses in primary care providers that cannot be afforded.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PART-TIME FEDERAL EMPLOYEES EQUITY ACT

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation that will correct an inequity in the computation of retirement annuities for some federal employees. The Part-Time Federal Employees Equity Act is intended to help support the federal government's ability to retain current employees in the face of the oncoming wave of retirement that will hit the federal workforce in less than a decade.

I am proud to represent more than 98,000 Virginians who have served our country within the ranks of the federal civil service. Protecting the quality of life of these beneficiaries and ensuring the future strength of the federal retirement system are two of the most important issues to my district. It is essential that Congress support efforts that maintain the integrity, quality and vitality of the federal workforce.

It has been well documented that over the next ten years, the federal workforce will undergo significant demographic changes that threaten the federal government's strength and effectiveness. As the baby-boom generation, which makes up a disproportionately large part of the overall workforce, nears retirement age, federal agencies will face a crisis in manpower, especially within its senior executives and management ranks. Information from OPM shows that approximately "60 percent of the government's 1.6 million white-collar employees and 90 percent of about 6,000 Federal executives will be eligible for retirement within the next ten years."

This likely wave of retirement threatens to drain the federal workforce of its most experienced and talented employees at a pace that will be difficult to replace with a well-qualified,

trained workforce. Congress, in coordination with the Executive Branch, must develop an overall strategy with specific policy solutions so that the potential "brain drain" doesn't threaten the efficient delivery of government services.

One leading factor that influences the retention of senior personnel is the retirement package offered by the federal government. As currently structured, the federal retirement system for some workers actually penalizes employees that wish to extend their careers by working part-time. As the federal workforce faces the prospect of losing an unprecedented number of employees over the next 10 years, many of the anticipated shortages can be met with part-time employees. One of the greatest impediments to allowing part-time work are disincentives and restrictions imposed by the federal pension system.

I have introduced the Part-Time Federal Employees Equity Act to address the annuity computations of federal employees retiring under the Civil Servant Retirement System (CSRS). I believe that this legislation can serve the dual purpose of correcting a longstanding inequity for retiring federal employees, as well as offering employees nearing retirement the option for continued part-time service without negatively impacting their retirement benefits.

Over 10 years ago, the 100th Congress included a provision in the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) of 1986 (P.L. 99-272) that amended the civil service retirement law for federal workers with part-time service. Section 15204 prevented part-time employees from being credited with the same number of years of service as those who worked full-time over the same period. Before the law's passage, an individual who had worked part-time for most of his or her career could switch to full-time work the last three years of his or her career and receive the same retirement benefits as someone who worked full-time throughout the same period.

As the Subcommittee knows, federal annuities are calculated by multiplying the average three highest continuous years of salary, times years of service, by an accrual rate. The new methodology determines the proportion of a full-time career that a part-time employee works and scales annuities accordingly. Under the formula, a part-time salary is calculated on a full-time equivalent basis (FTE) for retirement purposes. Thus, a worker's "high-three salary" could occur during a period of part-time service. This often happens when a senior-level worker cuts back on his or her hours. The disproportionate share of these workers appears to be women, who leave the federal service to care for others.

The problem with the new formula is that it has negative consequences for workers hired before 1986. First, it fails to provide the accrued full year of credit for each year of part-time service of workers who, before 1986, had completed part-time service for which they had understood they would receive full-time credit. Second, the formula can have a negative impact on retirees' annuity if the computation of the "high-three salary" occurs during part-time service. Specifically, the formula incorrectly minimizes full-time employment before 1986, which hurts agencies' ability to retain experienced federal workers by offering part-time employment. Finally, this complex formula can lead to computational errors involving annuities with part-time service. There are possibly

thousands of civil servants who are eligible under CSRS that may be impacted by the inequity in this law.

My legislative proposal will restore full credit for part-time work performed before 1986, eliminate the adverse effect of part-time service performed late in an employee's career, and provide a simplified annuity computation in cases involving part-time service. Though it is important to eliminate the inequity for future retirees, it is perhaps more important to tear down the artificial barrier to part-time service at the end of an employee's career.

Madam Speaker, I believe that this proposal will correct a long-standing obstacle to part-time service and may help agencies retain qualified federal employees nearing retirement for part-time service.

CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF MR. AND MRS. LARSON

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. and Mrs. John Philip Larson on the celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary. Phil and Joyce Larson were married 50 years ago on March 21, 1959 in Kingsburg, California. They raised two children and have three grandchildren.

Phil Larson was born on September 5, 1933 in San Francisco, California. His parents moved to the Central Valley where he was raised in the beautiful Fresno County countryside near the town of Kerman, California. Phil graduated a proud Kerman High School Lion in 1951. He joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1953 and was deployed to Korea on December 22, 1953. In 1956, he was honorably discharged from the U.S. Marine Corps and remained in the U.S.M.C. Reserves until 1961. After serving his country, Phil returned to the family farm. While continuing to farm with his father, he joined the Wilbur-Ellis Company in 1963, and after 38 years he retired in 2000. In 2001, Phil won the seat for District 1 Fresno County Board of Supervisors. Now serving his second term, he is a very influential leader for San Joaquin Valley agriculture. Phil is a true and exemplary public servant to his constituents and the Central Valley.

Joyce Larson was born on May 16, 1935 in the "Raisin Capital of the World," Selma, California. She grew up in the nearby town of Parlier. Joyce graduated a proud Selma Bear in June 1953. She attended California State University, Fresno and graduated in 1957 with a Bachelor's Degree in Home Economics. She taught Home Economics in Fresno at Roosevelt High School between the years of 1957 and 1962 and then taught another year at McLane High School. After raising her children she spent 13 years at Tranquility High School as a Special Education teacher. Joyce also received her Master's Degree in Special Education from Fresno Pacific University in 1994. She retired in 2000.

Phil and Joyce met through their church, which has been a foundation for their love and family. Phil proposed to Joyce in August of 1958 and they were joined in marriage on March 21, 1959. They have lived and raised their children near Kerman, California for the

past 50 years. They were instrumental in the founding of the Kerman Covenant Church in 1970. The highlight of their marriage has been their two children, Timothy John and Lisa Renae, who have blessed them with three grandchildren, Lindsey Goodell, Tanner Torrano and Haylee Torrano.

Nothing has been more important than their sense of family and putting God first in their marriage. The love and respect Phil and Joyce have shared has been a tremendous example to everyone who has known them. They are highly esteemed in the communities where they have lived and served, helping many in need.

Congratulations again to Phil and Joyce Larson. Their story is reflective of the American Dream, working hard and playing by the rules to create better lives for themselves and their children. As a result, they have made their community, their church, and the Central Valley a better place to live for future generations.

RECOGNIZING WILLIAM R. KEITH

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

Mr. KILDEE. I rise today in remembrance of William Raymond Keith, who passed away on January 30, 2009. Bill was born in Jackson, MI on October 24, 1929 to Ruth Arlene Young and Raymond Joseph Keith. Bill graduated from Detroit's Wilbur High School in 1948 and the University of Michigan's School of Banking in 1963.

Bill served in the U.S. Army in Germany in 1950–51, singing vocals with the 82nd Army Band. Employed by Manufacturers National Bank for 19 years, he worked his way up from messenger to branch manager and bank officer. Bill was well respected and admired for his 22 years serving in the Michigan House of Representatives. He chaired the House Education, Colleges & Universities, and Banking and Finance Committees. He was a champion for public education, always fighting to enhance learning opportunities for children. His long years of service took him to many international locations including China, Japan, Korea, France and Germany. The German President awarded him the Officer's Cross of Merit (the highest honor that can be given to a non-German citizen). Bill has received numerous awards for his work in public service. In 1991, he was inducted into the Michigan Education Hall of Fame. During his retirement, he volunteered as a docent at the Michigan Capitol Building, enjoying sharing that beautiful treasure with schoolchildren from around the state.

Bill also loved music and singing. Starting in high school when he sang with the Don Large Chorus on WJR, performing with big bands in the Detroit area, and more recently singing with his wife Phyllis in their church choir, at nursing homes, senior residences and local events, Bill loved to revive classic songs of the 40's and 50's. Many people over the years were touched by his music. Bill had an amazing sense of humor, and was always waiting to greet you with a new joke. Most of all, he treasured his family, including his wife, kids, grand-kids and his dogs. He was a kind,

generous and gentle man with a great strength of character and wisdom.

Bill is survived by his loving wife, Phyllis Keith, and his six children: Brian W. Keith of Lansing, MI; David R. Keith of DeLand, FL; April M. Keith of Lake Orion, MI; Betty Keith Pomerantz of Newbury Park, CA; Robyn S. Hubbard of Grand Rapids, MI; and Ryan E. Zaiser of Bloomingdale, GA. He is also survived by 10 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in celebrating the life of William Raymond Keith—an accomplished legislator, great leader and endearing family man.

HONORING TONY BROWN

HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the accomplishments of Tony Brown as he receives the 2009 Cecil Scaife Visionary Award at the Musicians Hall of Fame in Nashville.

Simply stated, Tony Brown is a legend in the Nashville music business. As the driving force behind MCA Nashville, Tony has been instrumental in the success of country music superstars from George Strait and Reba McEntire to Wynonna Judd, Trisha Yearwood, Vince Gill and Brooks & Dunn. Tony Brown's efforts have helped artists such as these create what is in essence a soundtrack for America.

But the overwhelming success of these artists is only part of Tony Brown's legacy. He is equally respected for his efforts to broaden the definition of what country music can be by signing and nurturing artists who defy easy categorization. He helped create space in the music business for people like Steve Earle, Lyle Lovett, Rodney Crowell, Kelly Willis and other artists who challenge the boundaries of country music.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Tony Brown as he receives this distinguished award. Please join me in congratulating Tony for his efforts to ensure that Nashville, Tennessee will always be one of the musical and cultural treasures of our country.

EARMARK DECLARATION

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

Mr. TIAHRT. Madam Speaker, in accordance with the February 2008 New Republican Earmark Standards Guidance, I submit the following in regards to the Fiscal Year 2009 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act found in H.R. 1105, the FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act:

Department of Education (DOE)—Arkansas City Public Schools: H.R. 1105, the FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act contains \$120,000 for Arkansas City Public Schools, Arkansas City, KS for the purchase of equipment in the Fund for the Improvement of Education (FIE) Account. The entity to receive